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issue 41, volume 84 www.newbuffalotimes.com Thursday, October 16, 2025

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IT'S FALL, Y'ALL...

CHILI LOVERS UNITE AT ANNUAL SKIP'S COOK-OFF

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PUBLICATION NUMBER 377960
CIRCULATION 5,000+ WEEKLY

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Village Council receives village lot sale proposal

BY THERESE DONNELLY

No final decision has been made, but the Three Oaks Village Council got an update on a proposal to sell the village-owned lot at 114 N. Elm Street at their Wednesday, Oct. 8, meeting.

Neighboring property owners Bridget and Tad Verdun have approached the village about purchasing the lot, stating the lot configuration required vehicles to drive over the Verduns' property to use the lot for parking and setback ordinances and lot configuration made it impossible for the village or a third party to build on the lot.

Village Manager Dan Faulkner told the council an appraiser is evaluating the lot and needs to verify if there are any easements or setbacks before determining a price. Faulkner said if the village decides to sell to the Verduns, the transaction will go through a title company.

He added that village attorney Charles Hilmer will meet with the Verduns' attorney to draft an agreement, which should be presented to the council at their November meeting.

During the October meeting, the council approved a draw of $449,369.80 from the state funds to pay the eighth installation of the wastewater treatment project.

The fund draw will go towards the $433,837.50 invoice from Oselka Construction. Project manager Andrew Rudd told the council the company has completed work on Pond 1's bank and he expects all work to be complete in the next few weeks.

The council approved a new ordinance to clarify and expand existing parking regulations in the village and tabled a decision on codifying ordinances 219-247 and zoning ordinances related to marijuana retail.

Faulkner explained that American Legal has been providing online codification services to the village, but there have been no updates for approximately six years. The new codifying would be added to the online source.

Councilmember Lois Jones said she was "not a fan" of the system, noting the public only has access to brief descriptions of the ordinances. She said she would like to have full ordinances available online.

Councilmember Becky Thomas pointed out the council had planned to make the village ordinances available on its revamped website.

Faulkner said portions are posted, but they aren't easily searchable, and the American Legal site helps the public find information. He added he was not opposed to looking into alternative ways to make the information more readily available.

Village Manager Dan Faulkner told the council an appraiser is evaluating the lot and needs to verify if there are any easements or setbacks before determining a price. Faulkner said if the village decides to sell to the Verduns, the transaction will go through a title company.

One of the Department of Public Works' snowplow trucks is close to 20 years old and repairs are getting expensive, Faulkner said, and the purchase process takes up to two years for the truck to be purchased and equipped for use. The council authorized Faulkner to seek quotes for a truck.

Property owners will soon be able to apply for short-term rental licenses online. The village has been working with iWorQ to create an online sign-up for the waiting list, and it is expected to go live by the November council meeting, after developers work out a few issues detected in a test.

Marco Chavarry asked the council for permission for Stroll Three Oaks to use light poles to display scarecrows during October. Chevarry said the group has been working with River Valley students to create the displays and people will be able to vote for their favorites.

In his manager's report, Faulkner said the village had removed a tree near 104 N. Elm after several people had reported tripping on uneven sidewalks caused by the tree's roots. Faulkner said the building owner has agreed to pay removal costs.

The only possession the wise have is virtue.
All else is subject to grief, but not his actions.
— Dino N. Fatouros

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times

Democracy Requires Transparency

CITY OF NEW BUFFALO
VANCE PRICE, MAYOR
CITY COUNCIL
MARK ROBERTSON, ROGER LIJEWSKI, KAREN GEAR, RICH KNOLL, VANCE PRICE
City Council meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30PM
CITY OF NEW BUFFALO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD
HOWARD MALES, MICHELLE HEIT, MICHELLE HANNON, PATTY IAZZETTO, BARBARA ANDERSON
Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 4PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM
SHERIFF BERRIEN COUNTY
Sheriff, Chuck Heit
Undersheriff, Greg Sanders
NEW BUFFALO AREA RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY
Meets at 10AM on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month (odd) at New Buffalo Township Hall, 17425 Red Arrow Highway New Buffalo
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS BOARD
LISA WERNER, JOHN HASKINS, DENISE CHURCHILL, JENNIFER SUMMERS, VANESSA THUN, STEPHEN DONNELLY, GREG VOSBERG
The Board meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at 6PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD
DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK, LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN, ARTHUR ANDERSON
Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM
THREE OAKS
THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM
VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7PM
GRAND BEACH
Meets on the 3rd Wednesday at 5PM EST
KIMBERLY WOLNIK, CLERK-TREASURER
HARRY WALDER, JACK GRACE, ED SEBASTIAN, PETER DOERR, EDWARD BRANDES
MICHIANA
VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL
Meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 1PM

Chikaming Township Board enacts moratorium on new STR licenses

SCHEDULE PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON STRS

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Members of the Chikaming Township Board enacted a 90-day moratorium on new Short Term Rental licenses, with only properties with valid or pending 2025 licenses prior to Oct. 9 being allowed to renew for a 2026 license throughout this period, at their Thursday, Oct. 9, meeting.

There will be a public discussion opportunity regarding STRs, which will be held at 6 p.m. at Chikaming Township Hall Tuesday, Oct. 28.

The moratorium was approved as a follow-up to the lengthy discussion on STRs at the board's Sept. 11 meeting, with board members having time to gather the comments made from residents during and after the meeting.

Township Supervisor David Bunte said that the discussion was prompted by the "numerous" complaints and "number of short-term rentals that seems to be increasing" in the township.

It was discussed that board members will review where they are in the process regarding STRs at the end of the 90-day period.

"I'm trying to put a stopgap in place, if that's feasible and if that's accurate, until we have an opportunity for everyone to come back – let's have a public meeting, let's have an honest, open, civil discussion in order for us to dig down a little bit deeper" throughout the moratorium period, Bunte said.

Changes to the 2026 Short Term Rental Affidavit and Rental Requirements were approved. Fire Chief Allen Weich said that the affidavit will state that, along with the noise ordinance, renters must also be made aware of the fireworks one and that they'll also need to be provided information about the nearest beach accesses and a map with Chikaming Township Parks rules for beaches.

Board members approved not proceeding with the additional module for the Rentalscape program for call-ins.

In addition to an online complaint form, Weich said that Rentalscape provides a portal that shows a clickable map of all the rentals and contact information.

Bunte said he asked that Weich and the code enforcement officer research options regarding adding a hotline.

According to data that was presented by Weich, in 2021, when the township still had Granicus and a phone-in complaint hotline, there were 24 complaints both on the hotline and online; in 2022, there were 16 online and hotline with Granicus; in 2023, there were 20 complaints, in 2024, there were 13 and in 2025, another 13.

Per the options that were presented, Bunte said, the township could potentially spend an additional $5,000 "just for them to take the information, not to contact the person and almost $7,000 for them to contact a local contact" for a rental.

"It's not trying to minimize the issues our residents have when they have them but when you've got these numbers, I'm not convinced that's a good investment for the township's monies," he said.

Treasurer Liz Rettig said that, per the data, the township could be spending "approximately $500 per call," with trustee Rich Sullivan adding that "if there's a serious thing, they're going to call the police, not going to call the rental agency."

Board members approved entering into a service agreement with the Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Per the agreement, the one-year agreement will "formalize" the township's participation in a Chamber Growth Alliance (CGA), a "collaborative effort led by SMRC to deliver coordinated economic and community development services to a coalition" that includes Chikaming Township, City of New Buffalo, New Buffalo Township and Three Oaks Township.

The pace of progress in artificial intelligence (I'm not referring to narrow AI) is incredibly fast. Unless you have direct exposure to groups like Deepmind, you have no idea how fast—it is growing at a pace close to exponential. The risk of something seriously dangerous happening is in the five-year time frame. 10 years at most. *— Elon Musk*

Two voting members will be appointed from each municipality to a "cross-jurisdictional, public-private advisory board (CGA Board) housed within SMRC." SMRC will also "employ and manage a full-time CGA Director to implement a program of work that aligns with the economic and community development goals of the CGA Board," the agreement states.

Each municipality will "compensate SMRC $25,000 annually to support CGA operations, including the shared cost of the CGA director and related program expenses."

Bunte said the first-year annual cost, half of which will be covered through a Pokagon Fund grant, is due Nov. 1, so the position of a director can be filled as soon as possible.

Board members approved a New Project Initiation Form with CSX. Bunte said that the township's consultant, Antero Group, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, CSX and the Berrien County Road Department met regarding the next steps on Sawyer Road improvements for Red Arrow Highway to Flynn Road. The project needs to go through a new project initiation form with CSX to "engage them and get started at doing a pedestrian crossing" at the CSX tracks in Sawyer, Bunte said.

Board members approved the fire department's request for its full-time staff to attend HazMat Technician Training.

Weich said the sheriff's department is looking to form a partnership with the area's fire chiefs "in a way to get additional trained team members" on the HazMat team, as well as to disperse the equipment throughout the county.

Regarding the training, everything will be paid for through a federal grant program. The training would be staggered throughout the course of the next year, with New Buffalo Township Fire Department possibly cross-training with Chikaming.

Board members approved Weich and Bunte to coordinate and dispose of used fire department equipment. Weich said that while most could be sold through an online bidding process, it might be best for a third-party reseller to broker the selling of some of the specialized pieces.

The replacement of township security cameras, with additional cameras for Harbert Park, was approved.

Board members approved a resolution on a five-year Parks and Recreation Plan for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Board members approved the Option Two with Blue Cross Blue Shield regarding the township's 2026 healthcare plan renewal.

Lewis Stahl and Carrie Ann Carlson

Carrie Ann Carlson, Lewis Stahl, Denise Kuehner, Anna Anderson

Shockwave Rock Orchestra to debut an electrifying free family concert

School of American Music presents high-energy fusion of classical strings and rock favorites, followed by a special school performance

The newly formed Shockwave Rock Orchestra will make its highly anticipated debut during a Free Family Concert presented by the School of American Music (SAM) and supported by The Pokagon FunD at 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 16, at the Episcopal Church of the Mediator, 14280 Red Arrow Highway, Harbert, Michigan. Donna Mitchell, School of American Music instructor, will produce the event.

A special encore performance will follow on Friday morning, Nov. 21, at River Valley Elementary School, 15480 Three Oaks Road in Three Oaks for students, as part of SAM's educational outreach initiative, supported by Journeyman Distillery's Islay's Barrel, the Everwise Credit Union Foundation, River Valley Elementary PTO and the School of American Music. Donna Mitchell, School of American Music instructor, will produce the event.

The Shockwave Rock Orchestra blends the artistry of classical strings with the power of rock and pop, featuring Lewis Stahl, violin; Carrie Ann Carlson, violin; Anna Anderson, viola; Denise Kuehner, cello; Carol Hazen, keyboard and Gregory Schoeneck, drums.

The group's electric repertoire spans from classic rock to modern hits, including Thunderstruck (AC/DC), Seven Nation Army (The White Stripes), Layla (Eric Clapton), Who Are You (The Who), Viva La Vida (Coldplay), Shake It Off (Taylor Swift), Lady Gaga Fugue, and Black Dog, Kashmir, and Rock 'n' Roll (Led Zeppelin).

Violinist and educator Carrie Ann Carlson helped pioneer the integration of electric instruments in orchestral performance. Following a 22-year career as irector of Orchestras aot Portage High School (Indiana), her ensembles gained national attention as "The Orchestra of the Future," a term coined by Band and Orchestra Product News. Carlson has been recognized by the American String Teachers Association and continues to perform professionally with symphonies across Northwest Indiana.

Carlson and co-violinist Lewis Stahl have also performed together in the La Porte County Symphony Orchestra, including a 2024 appearance featuring Wizards in Winter by the Trans-Siberian Orchestra. This December, they will again bring that holiday favorite to life during the South Shore Symphony Orchestra's Holiday Pops Concerts at the Memorial Opera House in Valparaiso, Indiana.

The School of American Music is proud to present the Shockwave Rock Orchestra's debut as part of its Free Family Concert Series, which brings world-class musicians to local audiences while celebrating the power of music to connect communities. The concert is free to the community; however, it's requested that guests a non-perishable food or personal hygiene item to donate to stock the pantry at Neighbor by Neighbor, to help our most vulnerable neighbors in Harbor Country.

For more information, visit www.schoolofamericanmusic.com or follow @SchoolofAmericanMusic on Facebook and Instagram. — STAFF REPORTS

SCHOLASTICS

New Buffalo school board receives food service update

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Even though she was only hired a year ago, New Buffalo Area Schools Food Service Director Susan Martinic has already been making strides in serving every student in the district's cafeterias.

"In a short period of time, she's been making a positive impact here on our students," Superintendent Adam Bowen said at the New Buffalo Area Schools Board of Education's Monday, Oct. 13, meeting.

Martinic said she believes "we've built two of the most incredible teams that I've ever had the pleasure of working with" regarding the cafeteria staff. Noting they're prepping more items and have a positive attitude,she'd said that they've had five new people this year out of 11. Cafeteria staff continue to learn about school food service, with annual training.

She said that she's pleased that the state approved a budget that will continue free breakfast and lunch for every student for the 2025-2026 school year.

Regarding bridging the gap between the school and community, Martinic said that they provide daily snacks, which consist of fresh fruits and vegetables, to Flowers Learning Center. On Oct. 1, which was Count Day, students received pizza from Roma's Pizzeria in New Buffalo.

The theme for National Schools Lunch Week is "Taste the World," with Martinic saying she created a menu with food from different countries being served each day.

This past Tuesday was "Bring a Pal to Lunch Day," with 120 parents signed up to attend. This past Thursday, 80 parents were signed up for third through fifth graders.

Martinic said she believes "we've built two of the most incredible teams that I've ever had the pleasure of working with" regarding the cafeteria staff. Noting they're prepping more items and have a positive attitude,she'd said that they've had five new people this year out of 11. Cafeteria staff continue to learn about school food service, with annual training.

Sourcing better products is also a priority. Martinic said she's already implementing new guidelines that must be in place by 2027-2028, which include a total weekly added sugar limit of less than 10% of calories and a sodium reduction of 15% and 10% for lunch and breakfast.

Martinic said parents must fill out a form with their doctor if their child has a serious allergy. Allergies that New Buffalo focus on are eggs, dairy, peanuts, wheat, milk and soy. When creating a menu, Martinic said she utilizes a program that breaks everything down, and each item the kitchen prepares has an allergy sheet that goes with it.

On Oct. 13, Michigan's Great Apple Crunch, every adult and child will have a fresh Michigan Golden Delicious or HoneyCrisp apple from Hildebrand Farms to crunch on during breakfast schoolwide.

Board president Lisa Werner said that Martinic "does a fantastic job making the changes."

"It's great that you're ahead of what we have to do in the future," she said.

Bowen said that the district's prior development agreement with Bradford Group regarding the Planned Unit Development on Lubke expired and was not renewed, adding that "many agreed upon timelines outlined in the original agreement were not met and as result, the partnership will not be moving forward."

"Now it's up the district to explore some other potential opportunities for the property that will align with our community's interests and the board of education's vision," he said.

Board members approved the release of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to the public for the purpose of seeking private investors/developer to partner with New Buffalo Area Schools in the development of property located at 12332 Lubke Road in New Buffalo beginning Oct. 13.

Board members heard of New Buffalo Area Schools' Michigan's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MiMTSS) Recognition.

Bowen said the elementary school has received the Silver Level of Implementation, which is an "Excellent Level of Implementation." The Silver Level for Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) is Tier One, which involves common area expectations. Multiple times a year, Bowen said, the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) measures their fidelity and how it's being implemented, which involves someone from Berrien RESA visiting the school and asking students about Bison expectations. Assemblies recognizing and rewarding students, which have been done for many years, are also held.

Board members approved the following lunch prices for 2025-2026: elementary School Student Lunch- $3.70; Middle/High School Student Lunch - $4; Elementary School Adult Lunch - $5.15 and Middle/High School Adult Lunch - $5.50.

Board members adopted the resolution for National School Lunch Week, Oct. 13-17.

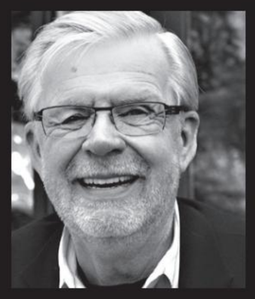
Elementary counselor Melissa Teed said that the school received the $1,000 WNDU Martin's Supermarket One School at a Time Grant, with some of the money going toward curriculum regarding drug prevention. A little will also go toward an upcoming drug-free themed Trunk or Treat, which will consist of different community and school organizations participating, as well as Red Ribbon Week activities.

Board members learned Bowen approved the following hires: Basketball: Boys Head Coach: Nate Tripp; Boys JV "A" Coach: Nate Tripp Jr.; Boys JV "B" Coach: Adam Forker; 7th Grade Boys Coach: Kevin Ebbeson; 8th Grade Boys Coach: Conner Lijewski and 7th Grade Girls Coach: Natalie Walter.

Bowen said elementary school resource officer (SRO) Rick Edgerle, the elementary school resource officer, has been nominated to receive the Outstanding School Officer Award for 2025 by the Crime Prevention Association of Michigan Awards.

"It's an honor Rick is with us and being recognized in the whole state of Michigan as school resource officer," Bowen said.

From the Bleachers



COLUMN BY KURT MARGGRAF IN CHICAGO

2025 proved to be a fascinating year for Cubs baseball.

Because the season is so long, each year there are numerous opportunities for teams to get hot and look like champions, then get cold and look like cellar dwellers.

There are times when you hit the ball hard, but it goes right to somebody, when the umpire blows a call that costs you a game, when what would have been the game winning hit is foul by inches.

Of course, there are times when all of these things go your way. The baseball season is long, and over the course of the season, the breaks tend to even out. Injuries are also a determining factor in the success, or lack of success, in every season.

The Cubs' season began with two losses in Japan against the Los Angeles Dodgers.

The difficult part of the schedule was early, but the Cubs navigated it. Early in April, the Cubs best pitcher, Justin Steel, had to undergo season ending surgery. Javier Assad, another starting pitcher, missed most of the season with injuries too, but the Cubs were hitting the ball all over the place and they were ahead of the Brewers at the all star break.

The second half of the season was completely different. The pitchers, particularly, Matthew Boyd and rookie Cade Horton, kept pitching well, but the hitters stopped hitting. The Cubs best player, Kyle Tucker, was a shell of his former self. He hid some injuries and was really mediocre at best for months.

His drop off seemed to have a profound effect on Peter Crow-Armstrong. Either that, or pitchers figured out how to get him out. Crow was being talked about as an MVP until the all star break, but was brutal for most of the second half. The one thing that stayed consistent throughout the season was the team's outstanding defense.

The season ended with pitcher Cade Horton on the injured list, pitcher Shota Imanaga throwing way too many home run balls, and Kyle Tucker having to be the designated hitter because he had a calf injury and couldn't run.They beat the San Diego Padres in the wild card playoff series anyway, then went down two games to none in the second round.

The team didn't want the season to end, and with the crowd cheering wildly, they won the next two games at Wrigley Field. Unfortunately, the last game was in Milwaukee and the Brewers won 3-1 to move on to the next round.

With the Cubs season in the rear view mirror, here are a couple of my observations. The Cubs have terrific fans, a terrific manager, and some terrific players. They also have a terrific farm system. Their management is good, but a little conservative.

The Marquee experiment should come to an end. The local press should be more supportive and remember how long the season is. Baseball is beautiful.

Zig Ziglar said, "Among the things you can give and still keep, are your word, a smile, and a grateful heart."

Be kind. Talk to you next week. Peace, love, and happiness.

Fire claims semi load of passenger vehicles

BY STAN MADDUX

A semi-truck that was hauling passenger vehicles burst into flames Monday evening in La Porte County.

It happened on Interstate 94 outside Michigan City about two miles east of the U.S. 421 exit.

Coolspring Township Assistant Fire Chief Warren Smith said the trailer was fully loaded with used passenger vehicles when the semi caught fire.

The flames then advanced to some of the vehicles, which were all damaged either from burning or the heat.

"It was a mess. Lots of flames. The fuel on the ground was burning," he said.

Firefighters from Michigan City and The Pines also responded to the blaze.

No injuries were reported.

Smith said the cause of the fire was not known but remains under investigation.

The westbound lanes of I-94 were shut down for a few hours to allow firefighters to safely put out the blaze and for a clean-up.

I guess at the end of the day, all women like to be appreciated and treated with respect and kindness.
— Sofia Vergara

Wheat grower breaks own record in defending yield title

BY STAN MADDUX

A southwest Michigan farmer broke his own record in defending his title for winter wheat yields against other growers from near the Great Lakes and beyond.

Nick Suwyn harvested 182 bushels of wheat per acre.

He outdistanced the second-place finisher by 12 bushels per acre in the Great Lakes Yield Enhancement Network contest.

He was also the first-place finisher in the same contest last year with 173 bushels of wheat per acre, which was the previous high mark in the five-year-old competition.

"I'm excited about it and looking forward to improve on it next year," he said.

Suwyn, 42, of Wayland was also the overall winner against other growers in the state for the second year in a row in the 2024 contest held annually by the Michigan Wheat Program.

His latest yield was also a personal best for Suwyn, who has finished as high as second place in the national wheat yield competition.

He credits his success to closely monitoring his crops from beginning until end in order to apply nitrogen fertilizer, if necessary, to quickly help his wheat overcome any stress it might be under due to factors like weather.

"You got to feed it. You got to continue to study it and try new things and see where you can improve," he said.

He believes Mother Nature was the difference maker in pushing his yields to their highest ever.

"We had good weather. A great spring," he said.

Suwyn raises over 500 acres of wheat along with about 3,000 acres of corn and soybeans on ground in Allegan and Barry counties.

The Great Lakes Yield Enhancement Network contest included growers from Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, New York, Washington and Ontario, Canada.

Dennis Pennington, a Michigan State University wheat specialist and member of the GLYEN steering committee, said the network is about discovering how the top producing wheat growers raised their crops.

The data is then posted online for farmers to access and use in their fields to try and improve their results.

Pennington said wheat growers from outside the Great Lakes were allowed into the contest because they heard about the network and wanted access to the information such as how much nitrogen each top producer put on their crops.

How growers from the more distant areas raised their crops is then obtained to expand the amount of data available at greatlakesyen.com, he said.

"It's kind of a network with the goal of farmers helping farmers grow better wheat. We just try to put all of the pieces in place to make that happen," he said.

Suwyn also finished in first place in the GLYEN contest for the amount of wheat produced above the potential of his crop.

His yields were 118 percent above their potential based on factors like amounts of sunshine and rain received during the growing season and water available to irrigate.

Suwyn also credited everyone from his agronomist on down to workers planting and spraying the crop for his achievements.

"It's a whole team of people that come together to make this all happen," he said.

RANSOMWARE ATTACK CONFIRMED

Michigan City officials have confirmed a computer network disruption was an attempt by whoever was responsible to extort money from taxpayers.

The Sept. 23 ransomware attack affected a portion of the city's data and impacted municipal employees online along with telephone access.

Mayor Angie Nelson Deuitch said no money was given and she's confident the breach can be fixed internally.

Currently, Nelson Deuitch said the focus is on safely restoring the system and ensuring critical city operations continue to function.

"I would like to thank our IT Team for working around the clock these past two weeks to make sure we can still provide services," Deuitch said.

A forensic investigation is still underway by the External Incident Response Team, which is comprised of IT professionals from Michigan City along with outside agencies to determine the full scope and impact of the event.

She said law enforcement is involved, making the matter an active investigation and limiting what the city can share publicly at this stage.

"We will continue to provide updates as we are able and appreciate everyone's patience as we work through this carefully and responsibly," she said.

— STAN MADDUX

Chili lovers unite at annual Skip's cook-off

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Alyssa Brake of Farm Chefs serves up chili

Dan and Laura Chmelina celebrate Team Chili Dog's award-winning chili

Darrel and Eryka Kettring take a break from serving chili

Debbie Mantei and Alek Purcell celebrate Sonny D's second place win

Generation Gap Band performs under the white tent

Sarah Sass and Matt Sobecki serve up Skip's chili

The Bridgman Fire Department serves up chili

Mary Mantei and Carrie Stoklosa serve up chili from Barndogg

Guests line up for some chili

Not even the rather large amount of chili that he was told needed to be made could deter Dan Chmelina from submitting his first entry of chili into Skip's 19th annual Chili Cook-off, which took place under the big white tent at 16710 Lakeshore Road in New Buffalo Sunday, Oct. 12.

Chmelina, who was there with Team Chili Dog, ended up cinching first place in the Judge's Awards division.

Rhonda Sobecki, owner/partner at Skip's Restaurant and Catering, said that Chmelina, who had frequented the cook-off in the past, was forewarned that home chefs need to make eight to 10 gallons of chili.

"He contacted me months ago and he said, 'No, I'm serious, I want to be in it, I really do' and he won - so they're really happy," she said.

Chmelina said that he brought around eight to nine gallons of chili for that day's cook-off, which is a "lot."

The chili was "kind of a spin" on traditional Texas red chili.

"Texas chili doesn't usually have beans in it, but I added some beans to it and then there's some secret stuff I can't talk about," Chmelina said.

Placing second was another newcomer to the chili cook-off scene: Sonny D's New Buffalo.

"We're glad to be here with Sonny D's first ever chili cook-off with the restaurant," Alek Purcell, chef, said.

He added that their entry consisted of "just a lot of spices and vegetables – it's got a really good amount of heat and a slight bit of sweet to it."

Hebron Farms, with Chris and Michelle Hebron, who've been entering the cook-off for around eight or nine years, took third place.

"We love coming here every year supporting Skip's and we do the farmers market here at Skip's – it's a way to say hi to all our customers at the end of the year and say, 'Thank you,'" Chris said.

He said they'd entered a farmer's chili, which was chock full of "vegetables and stuff from our farm plus other condiments from the other producers here at the market."

Othe entrees were from Chef Alyssa Brake with Farm Chefs, Home Chef Matt Mizia, Home Chefs Darrel and Eryka Leigh Kettring with Kettring and Company, Chef Jim Kabacinski with The Silver Palace - Master Caterers and Home Chef John Conlin with the Bridgman Fire Department, Skip's Restaurant and Catering and Barndogg.

The panel of distinguished judges were St. Joseph County Superior Court 3 Judge, Jeff Sanford; retired La Porte County Deputy Prosecutor, Atley Price; Food Scientist, Harry Hausoul and Mr. Paul Lawson.

Placing first in the People's Choice division was Alyssa Brake. Second place went to John Conlin representing the Bridgman Fire Department and third place honors went to Barndogg.

Live entertainment was provided by the Generation Gap Band and the Somethin' Somethin' Band.

The day also marked the end of the 17th season of Skip's European Farmers Market, which will be on hiatus until May 2026.

Other than a hot stretch of 90-some degree days, Sobecki said that the weather was good for the 2025 market.

The good weather also brought out a great market crowd.

"This summer, both for the restaurant and the market, was the busiest I can remember," Sobecki said.

Thousands of bushels of corn lost in dryer fire

BY STAN MADDUX

About 4,000 bushels of freshly harvested corn were ruined when a dryer about the height of a 10-story building caught fire Monday, Oct. 13, in Berrien County, Michigan.

It was about 4 a.m. when firefighters from multiple departments responded to D & S Farms outside New Troy.

Weesaw Township Fire Chief Ted Nitz said it took about 10 hours to put out the fire contained within the structure consisting of five dryers stacked on top of each other.

"That's the way they're built," he said.

Nitz said firefighters were taken to the top of the dryer on a lift belonging to the farm and used a hose to spray water down onto the burning corn.

It took so long to put out the fire because water had to be applied slowly to avoid causing the thin metal in the dryer from warping.

Nitz said heated thin metal coming into contact with too much cold water at once can distort the metal and even result in a collapse of the structure.

"We just put a little water on each time," he said.

Nitz said dryer fires are caused by a spark created somewhere in the dryer making contact with dust from the corn.

The dust is created from the fine skin on the kernels coming off as the kernels are shrinking a bit from drying, he said.

Nitz said the owner, Dale Seyfred, shut off the augers that send corn once it has dried down to three silos on the farm to prevent any of the burning kernels from getting into the corn already in storage.

He said just a small percentage of the corn in the dryer was burnt but the rest was contaminated by the smoke, which created a plume that rose several hundred feet into the air.

"Pretty much everything is shot," he said.

Nitz said there was some damage to the dryer, which had been running around the clock, but not enough to keep it from being used again once all of the corn was removed and the machine cleaned.

"He will have to rebuild the machine after a while, probably in the spring, but Dale told me he would probably have it up and running yet that evening," he said.

Dryer fires don't happen often but they're not uncommon.

Nitz said he worked two previous dryer fires in his 30-year firefighting career.

Firefighters from Baroda, Buchanan Township, Galien and New Carlisle assisted by shuttling water in tankers to the farm since there were no hydrants nearby at the rural location.

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A Writer's Life...

DURING THE GOLDEN AGE OF TELEVISION ANIMATION

BY JACK OLESKER

The gang's all here

I'll let you in on a secret: having writers visit was one of my favorite parts of being a story editor. Even as a story editor/writer, a lot of my time was spent in solitaire – sealed in my office editing a writer's script or writing one of my own. That's why you'd see writers at a studio – much more than artists or most other staffers – periodically coming out of their office so they could cruise the floor and bother other staffers.

You have to understand that writers draw their inspiration from human interaction, so being isolated was an a thema to all that being a writer is. And that was why I enjoyed writers' visits.

Ray Dryden's visit on this day was a particular pleasure. Ray and I went way back. I first met him when I was working as an associate editor at Entrepreneur Magazine. Ray had produced a couple of B-horror films – The Clonus Horror, starring Peter Graves (Mission Impossible) and The Attic, starring Oscar-nominated Carrie Snodgress (Diary of a Mad Housewife) and Oscar-winner Ray Milland (Lost Weekend). We struck up a friendship, so I was happy to give him a shot on Heathcliff.

In my office we chatted for half an hour. I gave him the Series Bible for Heathcliff and the Catillac Cats and said I was open to him submitting story springboards. If I got them approved he could write treatments based on them and if the treatments were approved he could write scripts based on the treatments. That was the process.

Ray thanked me for the opportunity and left. He came back the next day just before lunch and handed me 20 story springboards. I was glad I've given him a shot at the series.

Not to be outdone by Ray Dryden, a few hours later, Jack Hanrahan and Eleanor Burian-Mohr dropped in to deliver their Heathcliff and The Catillac Cats' story springboards. Specifically, they delivered 26 story springboards which Jack extracted from his weathered and battle-scarred briefcase with exaggerated aplomb.

He deposited the stack on my desk, declaring, "Every one a gem!"

I offered, "Why don't I greenlight you to go to treatment on all of them right now?"

The portly writer suggested, "It'd save a lot of time."

I grinned, put the stack in my in-box and looked to Eleanor standing alongside him, a benign, long suffering smile on her lips. As she moved an unruly long strand of brunette hair from in front of her eyes, I asked, "Is healways like this?"

Eleanor's lips pursed in a red bow as she softly replied, "Always."

Jack asked his well-worn, "So when do we hear back from you?"

I turned to him with, "You'll hear from me when you hear from me."

I'm pretty sure I heard a low growl of protest coming from him.

They were sandpaper and lace, the definition of yin and yang, interconnected opposing forces. They had a certain talent. But there was more to it than that. Eleanor knew precisely when to let him run like a marlin on a deep sea fishing line, and, to his credit, Jack knew exactly when to zip it and let her work her charm.

So here I am at this moment, now sitting in my home office, 37 years after they dropped in to deliver Heathcliff and The Catillac Cats story springboards, smiling as I write about Jack Hanrahan and Eleanor Burian-Mohr.

And that's why writers need human interaction...

HOROSCOPE

OCTOBER 16-22, 2025

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19

The vibe this week is very pugnacious and even if events call for an aggressive stance, be sure to temper it with your desire for a peaceable outcome. You are easily provoked now and it is better to restrain emotional responses. Choose diplomacy and create win-win situations

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20

Buckle your seatbelt. There are going to be some bumps in the road along with some exciting turn of events this week, and you're going to have to go that extra mile to get past the mayhem. Even if you have to go it alone, be true to yourself and keep your focus on what's important to you.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21

Fool hearted memories will make a fool hearted man. It's time to be completely realistic when looking at the past. This is the key to improving your health, work environment or living arrangement in the present. Take the lesson and apply it; the support and backing are there.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22

Strong inner feelings are likely to rise to the surface this week, which could put you at odds with partners. Thankfully as a cardinal water sign you are accustomed to strong currents and can surf through conflict resolutely. Embrace the tide and sail on to more stable terrain.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22

The vibe coming in this week can be challenging but also, very productive. There is a pull between conforming and rebelling. This is the time to develop your individuality, while actively participating in a group effort. Look for ways that accentuate your uniqueness, as you support others.

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22

Keep a map in your back pocket and prepare to traverse through some alternative routes this week, as you are likely to encounter roadblocks and obstacles. Be aware that these unexpected hurdles are really stumbling blocks to good fortune and generous gifts. Blunder on!

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22

Quarters could feel quite tight this week, as you are feeling pushed by partners or close associates. Their prodding may be calling attention to some areas of your life that you have shut down or ignored and even though it may be uncomfortable, it is necessary for a positive shift.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21

You will be very intuitive this week and will easily pick up on any structural issues that may disrupt communication or the flow of information. Tune out other people's expectations and listen with a more selective ear tuned to legitimacy and dependability, not speculation.

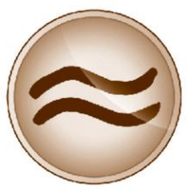
SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22—DECEMBER 21

The vibe coming in this week is all about opening up to new experiences while bringing the knowledge you have from the past forward. The important thing is to release the emotional component and retain the intellectual component of a previous struggle.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19

Prepare for more foot traffic this week as old friends, business connections and even strangers will be traversing your normally quiet home. Pay attention to the underlying connection between your visitors. Perhaps they shed light on otherwise hidden opportunities.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18



Your path is being lit up this week but progress may require some finetuning. Don't be fooled by aggressive language or bold posturing. Know that huge developments can be made with small adjustments and performance can be greatly enhanced with a gentler hand.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20

The stars are forming some stressful angles this week and suppressed insecurities are likely be exposed. It's important to come forward with any hidden agendas and express any pent-up aggression. Use this as an opportunity to clear the air and start fresh.

What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say. — *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

		1					4	
8	2		5	9		7	1	
			8	1		5		9
5			1					
	7		3			1	2	
2				8				
	9	3		5		2		
	8							
					7			

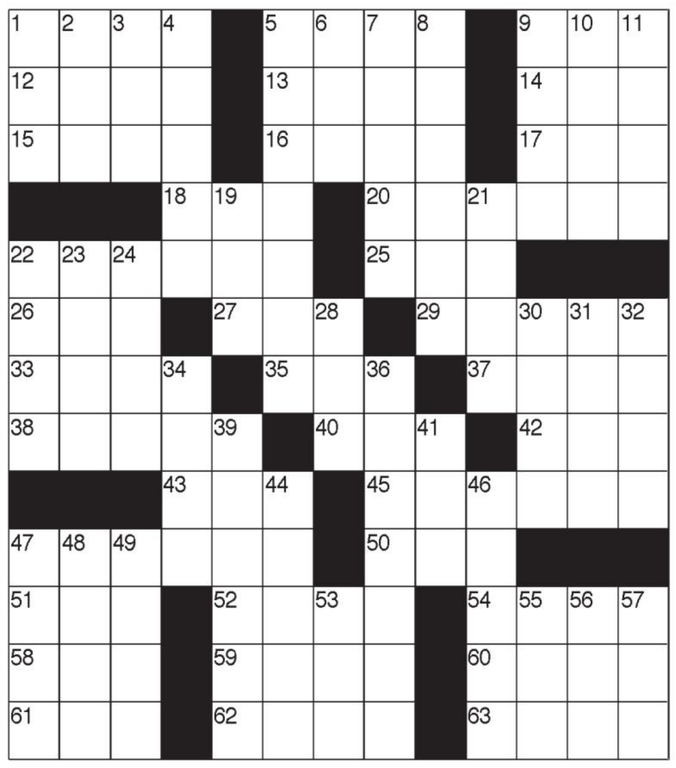
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Pork (Fr.)
5 Larva
9 Antiballistic Missile (abbr.)
12 Scientific name (suf.)
13 Harangue
14 Mine (Sp.)
15 Boat
16 Border
17 Haw. garland
18 Tattle
20 Gila
22 Pac. island
25 "Fables in Slang" author
26 Soul or spirit (Fr.)
27 Sayings (suf.)
29 Auricular
33 Antenna
35 Give (Scot.)
37 Latite
38 Indian tea
40 No middle initial (abbr.)
42 Shipshaped clock
43 River rapids
45 Dark volcanic rock
47 Group of fish
50 Malt liquor
51 Antiaircraft artillery (abbr.)
52 Ananias
54 Post
58 Bikini top
59 Amalekite king
60 Assuage
61 Decrease
62 Whole (pref.)
63 Freedman in Kentish law

DOWN

1 Aunt (Sp.)
2 Mother of Hezekia
3 Top
4 Irish exclamation
5 Presa (2 words)
6 P.I. volcano
7 Emerge
8 Yearly church payment
9 Pressure
10 And
11 Birth a lamb
19 Stinging insect
21 Indiana (abbr.)
22 Trolley
23 Daughter of Zeus
24 Insert (2 words)
26 Rom. box
30 Colza
32 Berne's river
33 Roast
36 Noun-forming (suf.)
39 Guido's note (2 words)
43 Almost
46 Grape disease
47 Christmas (abbr.)
48 Gaming cubes
50 Ship of the Argonauts
53 Fluidity unit
55 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
56 Ultimate degree
57 To (Scot.)



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To Your Health

COLUMN BY KAREN EDWARDS ND

YOUR HEALTH IS YOUR BEST WEALTH

PART 1

Some people today are enjoying good health and are not even aware of it. It is not until you fall ill or have a chronic condition that you really understand and appreciate what wellness is. If you are ill, there is a way to turn it around. Don't give up or fall prey that you have to be sick and on Rx the rest of your life. You can take responsibility and turn your health around.

I was on the chronic side of ill health for many years. I didn't know good health during my childhood, teenage and a lot of my adult years. I make daily intentions today to put my health first and keep autoimmune issues at bay.

From diet to lifestyle and everything in between. What we put IN and ON our bodies matter. I had to learn early on that no one could "fix" my health issues. I was told I would have to take Insulin shots the rest of my life and I would never get well.

As a young girl I began to research all I could on Natural Health in what was available at our library. A full potential of hope came out of all my research. I was obsessed with all that I was reading and applying to my life. I am still obsessed with natural health and healing. Anyone can do it. It takes dedication, detoxification, rebuilding and faith. You are worth it!

I learned over the years that it is the chemicals added to foods, snacks, creams and lotions, toothpaste, hair products, room sprays, laundry detergents, perfumes, synthetic materials, and many other toxic products that was keeping me sick. Even the very medicines they were prescribing me was loaded with dyes and toxins.

As I started to take full responsibility of my health, I begin to detox these poisons and my body responded. I cut out all the offenders that I knew intuitively was keeping my body broken down and sick. My body was so weakened from the ravages of DIS-ease, but in time, I begin to heal at the cellular level. It is very easy for me to fall back into the autoimmune issues if I stray from the true foods that was created for us.

It is not a diet; it is a lifestyle. There is really no eating junk food, unless I want to fall back into ill health consequences. The stricter I am with what I eat, the healthier I stay. I am responsible for keeping well. It is a daily choice. For me, there truly is no greater wealth than health. No amount of money can be offered to me to go back to the very sick person that I was. I know what health feels like, and I know what DIS-ease feels like.

And for those that are thinking "But it is my genetics" I can tell you this. I come from very weak genes from both parents who are long gone. (See part 2 next week).

DISCLAIMER: *Everything here is for nutritional education and is not meant to diagnose, treat prevent or cure. See your doctor when you have questions.*

PET OF THE WEEK

IZZY

Izzy needs exercise. She is almost four-years-old, about 23 pounds, spayed, and her vaccinations are up-to-date. She might be large and in charge, but she will be your lovable lap cat when she wants to. Izzy does has a lust for life. She loves running, her feathery toys, and talking in soft whispers. Izzy would not do well in a home with other cats, she just wants you. She will love you completely, once she gets to know you. Compliment her face, and she's yours. Make Izzy part of your home today.

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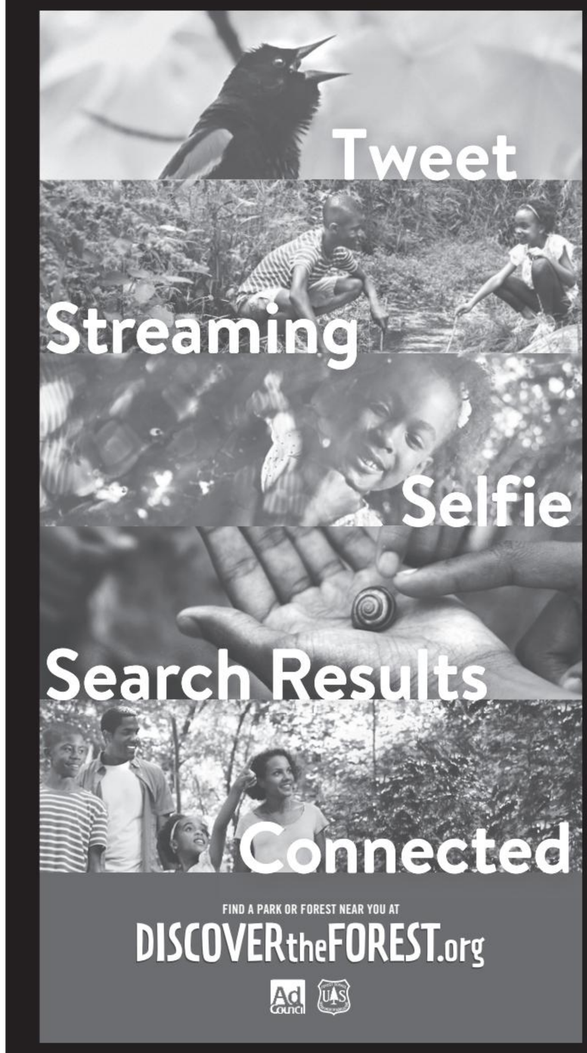


A snapshot of fall at 'Harvest Fest'

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Downtown New Buffalo was the perfect picture of fall during the New Buffalo Harvest Fest Saturday, Oct. 11.

The event, which was hosted by the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce and Criterion Productions, featured fall-themed activities, such as pumpkin- and face painting, on one end of the downtown. Tents with vendors touting their fresh produce and unique art crowded North Whittaker Street. Music from a lively line up of bands, which included Rick King's Royal Hustle, The Edgar Willbury Experience, The Back Ups, Johnny V and Intonation drifted overhead throughout the afternoon and into the evening.

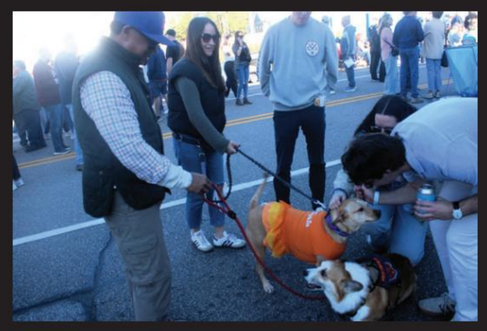
Throughout the day, festival goers could also sample award-winning wines from Southwest Michigan, local beer and hard selzers and tasty fare from area restaurants and food trucks.

Dan Nitz and Wayne Borg serve wine from Nitz Wines

Jan Folino displays her goods from Jan's Michigan Made and More

Festivalgoers line up for drink tickets

Maggie and Patrick Maline create pumpkin masterpieces in the kids area



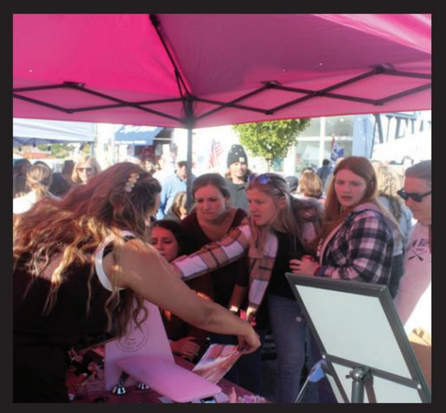
Joe Visaya and Nicole Gable watch as Winston and Madison interact with festivalgoers

Roshell Nesbitt (center) helps Athena and Kai Welsh create pumpkin masterpieces

The Back Ups take the stage

The Edgar Wilbury Experience takes the stage

Lexie and Lily Jaspering help with the pumpkin display



Festivalgoers check out the vendor booths

Jeffrey Ward and April Bredy serve wine from Dablon Winery

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